
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FEBRUARY 17, 1873.

Read twice, referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. JAMES B. BECK, on leave, introduced the following bill :

A BILL

To regulate the appearance and compensation of agents and attorneys prosecuting claims or demands before Congress or the Executive Departments of the Government, and for other purposes.

Whereas the secret employment of persons by those interested in legislation before Congress, and in the payment of claims by the Departments of the Government for the purpose of influencing members of Congress and Government officials in legislation and official conduct, has grown to be not only a system utterly corrupt and demoralizing against public policy, subversive of justice, and a fraud alike upon the employer and the Treasury, but also unjust and derogatory to the character, for honesty and integrity, of those in position and office who desire to act alone for the public good: Therefore,

- 1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
- 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
- 3 *That from and after the passage of this act no person shall*

4 be permitted to appear or act as agent or attorney for any
5 individual, body politic or corporate, relative to any claim or
6 demand against the United States, either before Congress or
7 any committee thereof, or before any Department of the
8 Government, when either he or any other person has any
9 interest, directly or indirectly, in said claim or demand, or
10 any agreement for compensation for services in obtaining
11 payment of such claim or demand, until such agent or attor-
12 ney shall file, with the proper committee of Congress or the
13 proper officer of the Departments, a statement on oath, in
14 writing, of the amount and character of compensation which
15 the claimant has agreed to pay for services rendered relative
16 to said claim, and no greater sum than the amount thus stated
17 shall be collectable out of or because of services rendered
18 concerning said claim or demand. All other and further
19 agreements for the payment of additional compensation rela-
20 tive to the collection of said claim or demand shall be null
21 and void. If any money or other thing of value is paid,
22 directly or indirectly, by the claimant, or any one for him,
23 to any person or persons, beyond the amount so filed, or
24 otherwise than as stated in said paper required to be filed
25 as aforesaid, it may be recovered by any person suing for
26 the same, from the person so receiving it, or from any
27 person interested in the payment so made, by suit in any
28 court of the United States, one-half of which recovery

29 shall be paid to the person suing therefor, and the other
30 half shall be paid into the Treasury of the United States.
31 And all persons directly or indirectly receiving any com-
32 pensation in excess of or otherwise than as set forth in
33 said statement, required to be filed as aforesaid, shall be
34 guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction before any
35 court of the United States shall be fined not less than one
36 thousand dollars, and may, in addition thereto, be im-
37 prisoned for any time not exceeding one year, at the dis-
38 cretion of the court: *Provided*, That in any case whatever, -
39 either before Congress or the Executive Departments of
40 the Government, and the amount of allowance, to the agent
41 or attorney, shall be subject to the orders of the Depart-
42 ments, or of the Congress allowing or ordering payment
43 of such claim or demand.